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Confidence-building measures in the regional and subregional context

Report of the Secretary-General

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I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 72/33, the General Assembly reaffirmed the ways and means regarding confidence- and security-building measures set out in the report of the Disarmament Commission on its 1993 session, and it called upon Member States to pursue these ways and means through sustained consultations and dialogue, while at the same time avoiding actions that may hinder or impair such a dialogue. Furthermore, the General Assembly urged States to comply strictly with all bilateral, regional and international agreements, including arms control and disarmament agreements, to which they were party. The General Assembly also emphasized that the objective of confidence-building measures should be to help to strengthen international peace and security and to be consistent with the principle of undiminished security at the lowest level of armaments, and it encouraged the promotion of bilateral and regional confidence-building measures, with the consent and participation of the parties concerned, to avoid conflict and prevent the unintended and accidental outbreak of hostilities. It requested the Secretary-General to submit a report to the General Assembly at its seventy-third session containing the views of Member States on confidence-building measures in the regional and subregional context. The present report is submitted pursuant to that request and on the basis of information received from Member States.

2. In that connection, a note verbale was sent to all Member States on 30 January 2018, requesting their views. To date, replies from the Governments of Armenia, Brunei Darussalam, Colombia, Cuba, Czechia, Ecuador, Greece, Jordan, Lebanon, Madagascar, Peru, Poland, Qatar, the Russian Federation and Ukraine have been received and are reproduced in section II below. A reply from the European Union has been received and reproduced in section III. Any views received after 15 May 2018 will be posted on the website of the Office for Disarmament Affairs in the language of submission. No addenda will be issued.

II. Replies received from Member States

Armenia

[Original: English]
[5 April 2018]

General Assembly resolution 72/33 provides an important opportunity to examine the challenges related to confidence-building measures at the regional and subregional levels, to identify the sources of tensions and seek solutions, thus preventing the use of force.

Armenia has always been a staunch advocate for regional cooperation in every possible sphere. The reasoning is simple and well justified; even if there are problems between countries in particular regions, any cooperation, regardless of its scope and time frame, makes an indisputable contribution to confidence-building.

Guided by this principled approach, Armenia makes every effort to advance confidence-building in the South Caucasus by utilizing the frameworks of the United Nations, the European Union, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), and the Ad Hoc Working Group on Small Arms and Light Weapons of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, as well as bilateral relations. Armenia has always demonstrated its readiness and will to initiate projects aimed at the development of regional cooperation in various fields.

Unfortunately, the prevailing situation in the region is characterized by an uncontrolled military build-up by Azerbaijan, the threat of use of force against

Armenia and an illegal land blockade of Armenia by Azerbaijan and Turkey aimed at its isolation from the outer world.

The ill-perceived political motivations of Turkey and Azerbaijan and kindred security approaches do not allow for taking practical confidence-building steps in the field of disarmament. Even worse, there is an extremely dangerous looming military build-up at the subregional level.

According to official information on the implementation of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, as of 1 January 2018, Azerbaijan has significantly exceeded its established ceilings in four of five categories of Treaty-limited equipment. The Azerbaijani holdings in battle tanks are 524 (the permitted ceiling is 220), in armoured combat vehicles are 387 (the permitted ceiling is 220), in artillery are 961 (the permitted ceiling is 285) and in attack helicopters are 57 (the permitted ceiling is 50).

In recent years, Azerbaijan has conducted large-scale military exercises, including jointly with Turkey, which are subject to prior notification in accordance with the Vienna Document 2011 on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures. The exercises have been conducted in close proximity to the State border with Armenia. Persistent calls by Armenia to ensure compliance with the Vienna Document 2011 remain unanswered. Such ill-practice, in sharp non-compliance with the OSCE commitments, seriously undermines trust, security and stability in the region.

The many-fold increase in Azerbaijan's military budget in recent decades and the persistent aggressive and harsh rhetoric of the Azerbaijani leadership, open territorial claims to Armenia (even its capital) also heighten the tension in the South Caucasus region and seriously undermine the negotiation process aimed at the peaceful settlement of existing problems, in particular the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

Confidence- and security-building measures are of particular significance in conflict resolution. Armenia has extended full and unequivocal support to such measures in the context of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Among the many positive initiatives of Armenia to that end has been a proposal to withdraw snipers along the Armenia-Azerbaijan State border and the line of contact between Nagorno-Karabakh and Azerbaijan, and the establishment of direct contacts and hotlines between military commanders. Armenia has supported the implementation of agreements on the expansion of the capacities of the OSCE Personal Representative of the Chairperson-in-Office and the establishment of an investigative mechanism into ceasefire violations, reached at the Vienna and Saint Petersburg summits in 2016. The realization of confidence- and security-building measures would consolidate the ceasefire regime, established by the 1994–1995 trilateral agreements between Armenia, Nagorno-Karabakh and Azerbaijan, would reduce tensions and prevent military and civilian casualties, thus restoring trust and creating an enabling environment for advancing the peace process.

Regrettably, Azerbaijan refuses to remove the snipers from the line of contact that claim several dozens of lives every year. The Azerbaijan side has continued to reject a project on expansion of the office of the OSCE Personal Representative of the Chairperson-in-Office and the creation of an investigative mechanism, thus dishonouring the agreements to which it had committed itself at the highest level. The situation in the conflict zone remains tense owing to continuous violations of the ceasefire regime by Azerbaijan, infiltration attempts of subversive groups and the shelling of military positions, civilian settlements and infrastructure, which have led to a number of casualties.

Despite the destructive position of Azerbaijan, which has had a negative impact on the atmosphere of trust and cooperation in the region, Armenia will continue to strictly adhere to its international obligations and commitments in the sphere of arms control and confidence- and security-building measures.

Brunei Darussalam

[Original: English]
[14 May 2018]

Brunei Darussalam has consistently supported efforts to promote confidence-building measures to prevent States from the use or threat of use of force in the settlement of disputes. The country has put great emphasis on diplomacy and meaningful dialogue, not only to protect its national interests but also as a contribution to wider regional stability and security.

Brunei Darussalam is a member of the ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting, the highest defence consultative and cooperative mechanism in ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations). The Meeting aims to promote mutual trust and confidence through greater understanding of defence and security challenges, as well as to enhance transparency and openness.

Under the ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting, Brunei Darussalam has championed an ASEAN direct communications infrastructure to provide a permanent, rapid, reliable and confidential means by which ASEAN Defence Ministers can communicate. The aim is to: (1) prevent or defuse misunderstandings and misinterpretations and therefore prevent escalation; and (2) promote quick-response cooperation in emergency situations. The first phase of implementation has been launched, thereby allowing two countries to communicate directly with each other and arrive at mutual decisions in a timely manner during emergencies.

Brunei Darussalam shall continue to closely cooperate with others and engage in confidence-building measures to ensure a stable regional environment and reduced the likelihood of tensions.

Colombia

[Original: Spanish]
[15 May 2018]

Colombia is of the view that regional and subregional instruments that promote confidence-building measures encourage transparency, lead to better relations among States and contribute to the prevention of conflict. While a number of these instruments require voluntary reports, Colombia supports all means of building confidence among States, in particular initiatives designed to foster the responsible exchange of information relating to arms transfers.

The United Nations Report on Military Expenditures, pursuant to the General Assembly resolution adopted each year entitled "Objective information on military matters, including transparency of military expenditures", is noteworthy in the area of confidence-building. Our country has submitted reports through that mechanism every year since 2007 and is already in the process of preparing its report for this year.

With regard to global transparency, the importance and relevance of the Register of Conventional Arms should be underscored, given that, if all countries report their acquisitions, there is a lower risk of a potential destabilization of the balance of power as a result of the accumulation of arms. Colombia submitted reports to the Register

of Conventional Arms in 1992, 2007 and 2009 and has requested the Ministry of Defence to provide updated records.

It should be noted that Colombia has submitted biannual voluntary national reports on the implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects from 2003 until the current year. These reports are drafted on the basis of inputs provided by the relevant government entities and compiled and presented by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

At the regional level, Colombia participates in the Conference of Defence Ministers of the Americas and in monitoring the implementation of confidence-building measures, with a view to promoting reciprocal knowledge and the exchange of ideas at the ministerial level in the area of defence and hemispheric security.

Within the inter-American system, Colombia complies with the obligations arising from Inter-American Convention against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives, and Other Related Materials, including the annual response to the questionnaire on the implementation and effectiveness of the Convention. Since 2011 the questionnaire has been completed by the States parties and States signatories to the Convention in order to gather relevant and up-to-date information on progress and challenges with respect to its implementation.

As a Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR) associated State, Colombia participated in the thirtieth meeting of the Working Group on Firearms and Ammunition in December 2017, in which it exchanged experiences and adopted joint mechanisms to support the implementation of political and legal instruments to promote coordinated action against the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

Another important confidence-building instrument has been the establishment of regional and subregional forums for the evaluation and analysis of global and hemispheric measures related to confidence-and security-building. The exchange of best practices for the purpose of reducing crime and various threats that affect integrity and security is also essential.

Cuba

[Original: Spanish]
[2 April 2018]

Cuba agrees with the internationally established definition of confidence-building measures and considers that they may be applied in the regional and subregional context. We recognize the concept outlined in the Guidelines for Confidence-building Measures adopted by consensus in 1988 by the Disarmament Commission of the General Assembly, which states that confidence-building is "a step-by-step process of taking all concrete and effective measures which express political commitments and are of military significance and which are designed to make progress in strengthening confidence and security to lessen tension and assist in arms limitation and disarmament".

Some measures that can contribute to confidence-building are:

(a) Notification and observation of military activities aimed at promoting trust among potential adversaries to demonstrate that their respective forces do not harbour any hostile intentions;

(b) The creation of greater transparency in military matters in order to strengthen mutual trust;

(c) Measures designed to address incidents and crises;

(d) Crisis risk reduction;

(e) The scaling-up of these measures to encompass political, economic and social matters.

Observance of the norms and principles of international law and the Charter of the United Nations, peaceful settlement of disputes, respect for the sovereignty of States and non-intervention in their internal affairs, rejection of the threat or use of force, cooperation among States, and adherence in good faith to international commitments are all indispensable elements of effective confidence-building measures. The involvement and consent of all parties concerned is essential in the design and implementation of confidence-building measures. Owing to their voluntary nature, these measures cannot be imposed. Their effectiveness will depend in large measure on the interests, needs and characteristics of each country, region or subregion — elements that should be taken into account.

The proclamation of Latin America and the Caribbean as a zone of peace at the Second Summit of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States in January 2014 is a concrete contribution to efforts to create a peaceful atmosphere that is conducive to confidence-building among countries of the region and with actors outside the region.

Czechia

[Original: English]
[16 April 2018]

In 2017, the Czech Republic implemented all commitments stemming from international agreements on arms control, disarmament and confidence- and security-building measures.

In accordance with the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, the Czech Republic:

- Organized and conducted one multinational inspection abroad (with the participation of four inspectors from four countries);
- Organized one multinational training inspection (with the participation of 14 foreign inspectors from 11 countries);
- Organized one training inspection (training for a NATO inspection team);
- Conducted one training inspection abroad;
- Participated in the training of specialists in the verification area;
- Took part in seven allied inspection teams abroad.

In accordance with the Vienna Document, the Czech Republic:

- Organized and conducted three inspections of specified areas and one evaluation visit (with the participation of seven inspectors from six countries);
- Took part in two visits to air bases and other military facilities and to view the demonstration of new types of weapons;
- Took part in two observations of certain military activities;
- Took part in seven inspections and one evaluation visit as a part of foreign teams;
- Received two inspections of specified areas and one evaluation visit.

In accordance with the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Annexes thereto (the Dayton Peace Agreement), the Czech Republic:

- Participated as a guest OSCE observer in two inspections (pursuant to article IV).

In accordance with the Treaty on Open Skies, the Czech Republic:

- Received one observation flight and conducted two joint observation flights;
- Organized one training observation flight;
- Took part in one training observation flight.

Ecuador

[Original: Spanish]
[15 May 2018]

Ecuador considers that improvements in regional and subregional integration provide the appropriate framework for the implementation of confidence-building measures. In Latin America and the Caribbean, such integration has been achieved through the establishment of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) and the proclamation of the region as a zone of peace by the Heads of State and Government of CELAC.

In the context of the Union of South American Nations, the South American Defence Council has achieved significant progress in a number of areas, with the aim of making South America a zone of peace and cooperation. To that end, in the Declaration of Paramaribo of 30 August 2013, the Heads of State of the region noted that the Council was the ideal space for moving forward in the development of strategic thinking.

The Council has worked on a shared vision of regional defence, based on such aspects as the protection of strategic natural resources, cyberdefence and cooperation in the defence industry and in capacity-building and training, in particular with the establishment of the South American Defence College.

Confidence-building measures at the regional and subregional levels have, in the view of Ecuador, been essential in building a defence system geared to face new challenges and combat common threats through the implementation of regional instruments in the service of peace and regional stability. They have also served to strengthen cooperative efforts in areas of common concern — such as the mapping of natural disaster risks and the conduct of peacekeeping exercises — that will benefit the peoples of our region.

At the same time, Ecuador believes that, within the framework of cooperation among the States of the region, each one must fully assume their responsibilities within their respective territories, making every effort to prevent threats to peace or public security from being transferred to neighbouring countries.

Greece

[Original: English]
[15 May 2018]

Greece (the Hellenic Ministry of National Defence) launched various defence collaboration initiatives, in bilateral, trilateral and multilateral schemes with neighbour countries in a regional and subregional context, in order to strengthen dialogue, develop common risk assessment and enhance transparency. The objective

is to promote the creation of a common defence cooperation platform aimed at creating an arc of stability extending from the Black Sea and the Balkans to Eastern Mediterranean.

Jordan

[Original: Arabic]
[10 May 2018]

- Jordan believes that measures to build confidence, security and cooperation among the States of the region towards eliminating weapons of mass destruction will bring about an increase in stability, peace and security in the region across national, regional and international levels, and will help to promote and strengthen equality, freedom and democracy. Accordingly, the Government of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan supports United Nations efforts to promote confidence-building measures at the regional and subregional levels in order to establish peace and security throughout the world. Jordan has consistently supported General Assembly resolutions aimed at establishing peace, resolving conflicts through peaceful means, promoting confidence-building and transparency measures at all levels and at supporting disarmament and arms control, in order to foster trust among the States of the region and thereby defuse potential armed conflicts.

- The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan complies with all Security Council and General Assembly resolutions on weapons of mass destruction, disarmament, non-proliferation and the use of force against civilians, particularly those resolutions concerning the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, such as Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), which provides the basis for curbing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction at the regional and international levels. Jordan also urges States to comply with United Nations resolutions and bilateral, regional and international instruments.

- Jordan complies with measures aimed at controlling conventional weapons and weapons of mass destruction. This course of action has directly affected the country's security policy at the regional and subregional levels. Jordan is party to a number of international instruments and participates in a number of initiatives concerning conventional weapons, weapons of mass destruction, non-proliferation and counter-terrorism, and participates in international efforts to prohibit the trade in small arms and light weapons, with a view to building confidence, promoting cooperation and establishing peace and security in the region and around the world. Following are some of those instruments and initiatives:

  - The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
  - The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty
  - The Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects
  - The Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction
  - The Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction

- The Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism
- The Proliferation Security Initiative

- Jordan understands that terrorism is one of the most significant threats to global peace and security. The Jordanian Government believes in the importance of combating all forms of terrorism and stresses that terrorism has no religion. The defence policy of Jordan regards terrorism as a major challenge that has the potential to undermine national security. That is in accordance with the political positions of Jordan, which are characterized by tolerance, prudence, reason and foresight. Therefore, the country has endeavoured to counter terrorism by enacting laws at the national level, acceding to all international counter-terrorism instruments and supporting all international counter-terrorism initiatives.

- Jordan has concluded military agreements aimed at establishing regional peace and security with many countries in the region and beyond, including the United States of America, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the European Union. The Government of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan provides its armed forces with adequate equipment and military weapons for protecting its territory and safeguarding its basic security interests, and not for the purpose of attacking other States. Furthermore, the Jordanian armed forces participate in United Nations peacekeeping operations throughout the world, in order to foster security, peace and stability in various conflict areas. Jordan is one of the most significant contributors to United Nations peacekeeping operations.

- At the regional level, Jordan has collaborated closely with neighbouring States, on a basis of cooperation and shared interests, to establish peace and security in the Middle East. Jordan concluded a peace treaty with the State of Israel in 1994, and, since then, the Government has continued to be a regional pioneer, acceding to international treaties and instruments on arms control and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction in order to establish a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. In 1998, Jordan signed the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction and subsequently removed all mines along the border between Jordan and Israel. It also created the National Committee for Demining and Rehabilitation in order to follow up on that process and to ensure that Jordan was cleared of all mines and explosives that could kill civilians by 2012, as well as to provide assistance to anyone injured by landmines.

- On the humanitarian front, Jordan has always been among the first in the region to take the initiative in alleviating human suffering at the regional and international levels. It has hosted many refugees and displaced persons from various countries, and has recently welcomed some 1.4 million Syrian refugees, providing them with health care and social services despite the precarious economic situation faced by Jordan. Jordan believes that it is important for States to work together to alleviate human suffering. The army continues to provide free medical care, dispatch medical teams, and establish various field hospitals under the auspices of the United Nations.

- Jordan encourages the resolution of armed conflicts through negotiation, arbitration and legal settlement, by resorting to regional agencies or arrangements, or by other peaceful means chosen by the parties. Jordan calls on Member States and the international community to enhance the effectiveness of United Nations peacekeeping and security efforts by complying with Security Council and General Assembly resolutions and providing the Organization with

the tools it needs to prevent conflict and foster stability and security among the peoples of the world.

Lebanon

[Original: Arabic]
[15 May 2018]

The army command notes that Lebanon supports all international initiatives and instruments aimed at building confidence. It also supports the maintenance of military balance and efforts to combat the uncontrolled proliferation of various types of weapons in the region and globally, because of the serious global, regional and subregional threats they pose. Lebanon also reaffirms that it complies with international law and the principles set out in the Charter of the United Nations, particularly the principles of the sovereign equality and territorial integrity of States. The main obstacle to confidence-building for Lebanon at the regional and subregional levels is the Israeli enemy, which continues to violate international laws and norms and possesses weapons of mass destruction, which constitute an ever-present threat at the local and regional levels.

Madagascar

[Original: French]
[15 May 2018]

The following measures have been adopted:

- Accession to the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone on 23 December 2003;
- Ratification of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons on 8 October 1970.

Peru

[Original: Spanish]
[15 May 2018]

As a signatory State to the Charter of the United Nations, Peru has a legal framework consistent with its purposes and principles, including specifically with respect to the "peaceful settlement of disputes".

Similarly, in the context of the General Assembly resolution 72/33, Peru has amassed various confidence-building measures and mechanisms, such as the Conferences of the Ministers of Defence of the Americas, bilateral working groups, standing committees on consultation and political coordination (2+2), and rounds of talks held between senior regional and subregional military leaders, all of which are designed to build mutual trust and develop a concept of comprehensive regional security that fosters friendship and cooperation among the armed forces.

In this regard, it should be noted that the recommendations contained in the above-mentioned resolution are aligned with State policies concerning strict respect for international law, legal equality and the sovereignty of States; the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries; the self-determination of peoples, faithful compliance with treaties, the peaceful settlement of conflicts and the prohibition of the threat or use of force; and the sovereign right of every nation to build and maintain freely the socioeconomic and political system that they choose.

Poland

[Original: English]
[30 April 2018]

Poland remains committed to the regional security architecture based, inter alia, on conventional arms control regimes and confidence- and security-building measures. The three major arrangements — the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, the Vienna Document and the Open Skies Treaty — remain the cornerstone of the security system in the Euro-Atlantic space. Poland strictly complies with all arrangements and calls upon all OSCE-participating States to do likewise. In fact, Poland believes that compliance is a precondition for rebuilding trust and revitalizing cooperative security in Europe. Regrettably, the current security environment in the region is characterized by a lack of trust caused by Russian aggression against Ukraine, Russia's decision to suspend its participation in the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, and Russia's reluctance to engage in the process to modernize confidence- and security-building measures.

Poland's efforts are aimed at strengthening the existing arrangements, which need to be modernized and updated. Acting in a constructive way, Poland has proposed a modernization of paragraph 17 in chapter III of the Vienna Document, proposing a draft decision on strengthening cooperation with regard to hazardous or dangerous incidents of a military nature. Poland is also a co-sponsor of another nine proposals aiming at modernizing the Vienna Document, including on lowering thresholds for prior notification and observation, improving verification options for evaluation visits, and introducing new regulations concerning the so-called snap exercises. Moreover, to address the issue of increased military activity in the region, in 2017, Poland launched an initiative for voluntary briefings on military exercises in the OSCE Forum for Security Cooperation. Twelve OSCE-participating States (Belarus, Estonia, Germany, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, Sweden and the United States) decided to conduct such briefings in 2017. Furthermore, under chapter IX of the Vienna Document, Poland has concluded two bilateral agreements on military transparency with its neighbours, Belarus and Ukraine. To increase transparency and confidence, mutual inspection visits are taking place each year on a parity basis. The agreements function well and contribute to the fostering of regional stability and predictability.

Poland remains engaged in the OSCE structured dialogue process — a format initiated at the OSCE Ministerial Council in December 2016. Poland hopes that this process will help to restore trust and mutual understanding in the OSCE area. Hence, the structured dialogue process can be viewed as a confidence-building measure in itself.

Responding to an increasing number of military incidents resulting from the irresponsible behaviour of Russian military aircraft, in 2015, Poland — together with all Baltic States — engaged in the work of the Baltic Sea Project team, under the auspices of the International Civil Aviation Organization, which produced recommendations on flight safety of flights over high seas. The output of the Baltic Sea Project team may be used in other sea regions as valuable lessons learned.

Qatar

[Original: Arabic]
[27 April 2018]

The most important confidence-building measures are a commitment to universalization of agreements on weapons of mass destruction and humanitarian

instruments, strict compliance with all such agreements, and the establishment of credible bilateral, regional and subregional mechanisms and measures for the implementation of agreements without discrimination in order to prevent the outbreak of conflicts and promote international security and peace in the region.

Russian Federation

[Original: Russian]
[15 May 2018]

Robust security in Europe and its key components — conventional arms control in Europe and the Vienna Document 2011 on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures — are now in a deep systemic crisis. Instead of eliminating the dividing lines in Europe, attempts are still being made to strengthen the "closed security architecture" by enlarging the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) to the detriment of the development of pan-European mechanisms and institutions.

NATO is actively pursuing an official policy designed to "contain" Russia and change the balance of military power in the European region in its favour, including in close proximity to Russian borders.

These combined factors are having a very negative impact on conventional arms control regimes and instruments in Europe and on confidence- and security-building measures, undermining the original foundations on which they were built and have operated. What is occurring is the erosion and devaluation of these regimes.

The effectiveness of confidence- and security-building measures is also adversely impacted when they are not used as intended, but as a tool for exerting political pressure.

While the pressure is being ratcheted up on Russia, proposals are simultaneously being made that we should substantially update the confidence- and security-building measures contained in the Vienna Document 2011. However, transparency measures cannot be drawn up in a context of confrontation, a sanctions policy and the rejection of military cooperation. The policy of "containment" of Russia undermines the basis for talks on comprehensively updating the Vienna Document.

Owing to the intrinsic relationship between confidence- and security-building mechanisms and the conventional arms control regime in Europe, these issues must be considered in a holistic manner. It is impossible to fundamentally update the Vienna Document when specific proposals on how to restore the viability of the conventional arms control regime in Europe have not been made by the NATO countries.

The path towards creating a normal atmosphere for dialogue on confidence- and security-building measures and conventional arms control in Europe lies in the freezing of NATO military capacity close to Russian borders and in the simultaneous reduction of the NATO military activity on the "eastern flank", and in the subsequent withdrawal of forces and equipment on continuous rotational presence to their permanent locations.

Such an approach would also help to significantly reduce the risks of dangerous incidents. Russia, in principle, is open to a dialogue on measures to prevent dangerous military activities. We already have a number of bilateral agreements in this regard. We are also ready to continue similar work with other countries through bilateral channels.

We consider the Treaty on Open Skies to be a major confidence- and security-building measure. The Treaty, together with the Vienna Document 2011, remains a

credible instrument for transparency in military activities. We are concerned about the situation in the Open Skies Consultative Commission related to the absence of a decision on the distribution of quotas for observation flights in the year 2018. As a result of the destructive position taken by Georgia, even the opportunity to carry out any missions under the Treaty on Open Skies this year has been thrown into question. We consider the survival of the Treaty to be imperative.

Ukraine

[Original: English]
[3 May 2018]

Ukraine's consistent commitment to enhancing transparency and predictability in the military field, including through effective confidence-building measures, remains unchanged. Moreover, this commitment has been reinforced by the ongoing Russian aggression against Ukraine.

Ukraine continues to support all confidence-building measures taken at the regional level, including those of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), and at the subregional and bilateral levels. It has been actively advocating the revision of the OSCE Vienna Document 2011 on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures and stands for expanding the scope of application of these measures. As a victim of Russia's hybrid war, Ukraine also favours tightening the intrusiveness of the measures, including through lowering the thresholds for the notification and observation of military exercises, which can be used as a means of intimidation and preparation for direct military aggression, especially against neighbouring States.

Ukraine further favours an increase in the number of inspections and the size of inspection teams, the strengthening of risk-reduction mechanisms, including through the use of fact-finding missions, and a constant assessment of the efficiency of confidence-building measures instruments, including from the perspective of their applicability, usefulness and viability during an armed conflict, in order to preclude a repeat of Ukraine's tragic case anywhere else.

Ukraine attaches great importance to bilateral confidence-building measures with neighbouring countries in border areas. To date, Ukraine has entered into relevant bilateral agreements with the Republic of Poland, Hungary, the Slovak Republic, the Republic of Belarus and Romania. Conducting inspections on a parity basis pursuant to those agreements has confirmed their practical usefulness in maintaining and deepening trust, friendly relations and political-military cooperation among the countries concerned, thereby enhancing and complementing the European confidence- and security-building process.

Noteworthy features of these bilateral regimes, which could be borrowed by others to design or improve confidence-building measures, are: the observation of military activities starting from the tactical level; the prohibition of military exercises at the battalion level and above, at a distance of 10–20 km from a border; the application of such measures near the border to activities of not only the armed forces, but also other forces; the possibility of extending inspections for an additional period of time and their expansion to battalion-level units.

Regrettably, the numerous proposals that Ukraine has made to enter into a similar agreement with Russia have been rejected by the Russian side. In addition, the Russian Federation has put into an ongoing state of impasse subregional military cooperation and confidence-building arrangements of the littoral States of the Black Sea such as the document on confidence- and security-building measures in the naval field in the Black Sea, which had been initiated by Ukraine.

Notwithstanding the deteriorated security situation in the OSCE area caused by the uncivilized behaviour of the current Kremlin leadership, Ukraine believes that the experience gained in the development of confidence-building measures in the OSCE region deserves appropriate attention and, therefore, that the Vienna Document, which has generated a great deal of experience in the field of confidence-building, can serve as a viable example for similar arrangements in other regions of the world.

III. Reply received from the European Union

[Original: English]
[14 May 2018]

The European Union strongly supports the establishment of confidence- and security-building measures as an important tool to overcome mistrust, enhance transparency and maintain peace and security at the regional and subregional levels.

Confidence-building measures constitute an important factor in preventing conflicts and enhancing overall political stability and the security environment, especially in situations of armed conflict and in areas of tension.

European countries have greatly benefited from the confidence-building measures that have been introduced in Europe, in particular through the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), for example, in the Vienna Document and the OSCE documents on small arms and light weapons and on stockpiles of conventional ammunition, and measures contained in the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe and the Treaty on Open Skies.

The European Union, therefore, will continue to support and promote confidence-building measures in both regional and subregional contexts and in other areas of the world, especially in areas of tensions, taking into account the specific characteristics of each region.